
WHAT IS A VICTIM OFFENDER MEETING?

A Victim Offender Meeting is a process that provides interested victims the opportunity to meet with their offenders in a safe structured setting with the assistance of a trained facilitator.

A Victim Offender Meeting provides:

- the opportunity for victims of crime to help determine a meaningful resolution of the harms they have suffered;
- the opportunity for young offenders to take direct responsibility for the harms they have caused;
- the opportunity to resolve criminal offenses in a way that builds a safe and healthy community.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS?

Victim Offender Meetings focus on:

- **the fair and reasonable resolution** of a crime that enables victims to move forward with their lives with the knowledge that the crime has been dealt with in a way that addresses their concerns;
 - enabling offenders to take **meaningful responsibility** for their actions in a manner that encourages and strengthens their ability to be positive, contributing members of the community;
 - providing an effective response to crime that builds and strengthens **safe, healthy communities**.
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WHO PARTICIPATES?

- Victims of crime who have questions they want the offender to answer.
- Victims who have information, such as how they were impacted by the crime, that they want to share with the offender.
- Offenders who are prepared to acknowledge responsibility for their offense and who are willing to make amends for the harm done.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Every victim of a crime committed by a juvenile in Clark County has the option to consider a Victim Offender Meeting.
- In every case where the victim expresses an interest in such a meeting, a careful assessment is made of whether such a meeting can be held that will result in helpful outcomes for the participants.
- Meetings are not held if the offender does not accept responsibility for the offense, or if the offender demonstrates a lack of remorse. Offenders must be willing to make meaningful amends for the harms they have caused.
- Juvenile offenders can be referred to participate in Victim Offender Meetings by the Clark County Juvenile Court. Generally these referrals come from Probation Counselors who screen youth for appropriateness.
- When an offender is referred to a Victim Offender Meeting, it is still the choice of the crime victim as to whether or not they want to participate.

WHAT ARE THE RESULTS?

- Crime victims are given a voice in identifying what harms have been done and what steps need to be taken for meaningful accountability by the offender.

- Young offenders are confronted with the human cost of their actions and challenged to take direct and meaningful responsibility for their actions.
- There is a focus on the real harms caused by crime and the accountability required of the offender that truly addresses those harms.

ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

- Victim Offender Meetings are led by a trained facilitator whose role is to guide the participants through the helpful stages of the meeting.
- The facilitator has the responsibility to ensure that each person is treated respectfully, given ample opportunity to ask questions, share information and create a plan that addresses the harms done.

BACKGROUND

Victim Offender Meetings are an initiative of the Clark County Juvenile Court and the City of Vancouver. It is one of many initiatives of the Juvenile Court that carries out the community's desire to address crime restoratively.

A commitment to meaningfully address victims' concerns and to hold young people accountable for their actions are key values of a Restorative Justice response that strengthens the health and safety of our communities.

Victim Offender Meetings have been used in North America for the past 30 years. The flexibility and effectiveness of these meetings have led to their use in an increasing number of U.S. communities.